

Message Text

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70

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 SR-02 ORM-03 SWF-02 EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6464

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USUN NEW YORK 2560

UNCLAS BEIRUT 1804

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID SREF UNRWA LE JO

SUBJECT: PL 480 TITLE II TA 4630 UNRWA SHIPPING PROPOSAL FOR
JORDAN

REF: STATE 6974 AND 26227

1. SS "MASON LYKES" ARRIVED BEIRUT JAN 13 CARRYING 5,086
MT OF FLOUR FOR UNRWA/JORDAN AND DEPARTED JAN 26. TURN-
AROUND TIME LENGTHENED BY SEVERE STORMS AND RESULTANT
HEAVY PORT CONGESTION, BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN LONGER
HAD NOT UNRWA OFFICIALS AND LOCAL LYKES AGENT ARRANGED
WITH LEBANESE AUTHORITIES FOR PRIORITY BERTHING AND CARGO
HANDLING. UNRWA HEADQUARTERS BELIEVES UNLOADING WAS AS
EXPEDITIOUS AS COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED UNDER THE CIR-
CUMSTANCES. AGENCY NOTES THAT SECOND SHIPMENT OF 3,931
MT FLOUR DESTINED FOR JORDAN ARRIVED HERE ABOARD SS
"JOSEPH LYKES" FEB 7, AND THAT VESSEL HAD DISCHARGED
CARGO AND DEPARTED ON FEB 12 DESPITE CONTINUING PORT
CONGESTION. NOW AWAITING ARRIVAL OF SS "LOUISE LYKES"
WITH 6,114 MT FLOUR FEB 23, AND EXPECTATION IS THAT THIS
SHIPMENT WILL ALSO RECEIVE PRIORITY HANDLING AT BEIRUT PORT.

2. ALTHOUGH UNRWA OFFICIALS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH
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SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE, THEY VERY DISTURBED BY FACT

THAT REPEATED HEAVY SNOWFALLS, WHICH HAVE CAUSED PRO-LONGED CLOSURE OF MOUNTAIN ROAD AND RAIL ROUTES TO SYRIA, HAVE PREVENTED ONWARD SHIPMENT OF ALL BUT FRACTION OF "MASON LYKES" CARGO TO JORDAN. ROAD AND RAIL TRAFFIC RESUMED SEVERAL DAYS AGO, BUT ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES IN MOVING JORDAN-BOUND FLOUR ARE BEING ENCOUNTERED DUE TO LOCAL SHORTAGE OF TRUCKS AND PUNY CAPACITY OF JITNEY RAILROAD TO DAMASCUS. AGENCY HOPES TO HAVE MOVED "JOSEPH LYKES" CARGO OUT OF LEBANON BY TIME "LOUISE LYKES" ARRIVES FEB 23, BUT MOST OF "MASON LYKES" CARGO--WHICH HAS BEEN MOVED FROM BEIRUT PORT TO LOCAL AGENCY WAREHOUSE TO AVOID PORT STORAGE CHARGES-- WILL PROBABLY TAKE LONGER TO MOVE. IN FACT, UNRWA MAY DECIDE RETAIN SOME OF IT FOR USE IN LEBANON OR SYRIA AND DRAW ON FLOUR RECEIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES (E.G., FRENCH FLOUR TO BE DISCHARGED AT SYRIAN PORT OF TARTUS NEXT WEEK) TO MAKE UP DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS IN JORDAN.

3. DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS, UNRWA COMPTROLLER CALLOW, WHEN INFORMED OF CONTENTS PARA 4 STATE 6974, STRONGLY URGED QAT ALL RPT ALL SHIPMENT OF US FLOUR DESTINED FOR UNRWA'S USE IN JORDAN BE DELIVERED TO BEIRUT. HAVING AGREED TO AID/WASHINGTON'S ORGINAL PROPOSAL THAT THIS BE DONE AND HAVING SIGNED REQUISITE PA/PR (SEE CAROLAN-PRAHASH KETTER DATED FEB 7), CALLOW OPPOSES ANY AMENDMENT ON GROUNDS IT TANTAMOUNT TO "CHANING HORSES IN MID-STREAM". HOUGHTON

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